

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 TEL AV 02976 061339Z
ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
-----125192 061342Z /45
Z O 061306Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO AMEMBASSY CAIRO FLASH
SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1672
INFO WHITE HOUSE IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T TEL AVIV 2976

EXDIS (DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS)

CAIRO FOR ATHERTON

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV PEPR IS EG
SUBJ: BEGIN MESSAGE TO SADAT

REF.: TEL AVIV 2941

1. BEGIN'S LETTER TO SADAT--UNFORTUNATELY--SPEAKS FOR ITSELF. ON THE MORNING AFTER THE MOST POSITIVE THING I CAN FIND TO SAY ABOUT IT IS THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO DOUBT THAT BEGIN HIMSELF WROTE IT. IT IS VINTAGE BEGIN:0 (\$ 18 58:, ARGUMENTATIVE, SANCTIMONIOUS, INSENSITIVE AND PLAINTIVE--IN SHORT, BEGIN AT HIS WORST. ONE INTERPRETATION IS THAT IF PROOF WERE NEEDED THAT BEGIN DOES NOT COMPREHEND SADAT'S CHARACTER OR THE NATURE OF THE PROCESS IN WHICH HE IS A KEY FIGURE, THIS LETTER SHOULD PROVIDE IT. AN ALTERNATE INTERPRETATION WOULD BE THAT BEGIN IS CONVINCED THAT SADAT IS IN A WEAKER NEGOTIATING POSITION AND WILL EVENTUALLY COME AROUND, IF ONLY BEGIN STANDS HIS GROUND.

2. THAT HAVING BEEN SAID, I NOW CONCLUDE, UNFORTUNATELY
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 TEL AV 02976 061339Z

ONLY IN RETROSPECT, THAT SADAT'S MESSAGE IN ITS ORIGINAL FORM WOULD PROBABLY HAVE EVOKED VERY MUCH THE SAME WRITTEN RESPONSE FROM BEGIN. WE MAY HAVE INADVERTENTLY DONE OUR OVERALL EFFORTS A DISSERVICE BY WORKING TO PERSUADE SADAT TO MODIFY HIS MESSAGE AND MAKE IT LESS CONFRONTATIONAL. I FULLY ENDORSED THAT EFFORT AT THE TIME, BUT I CAN NOW SEE TWO ADVERSE RESULTS OF

BEGIN'S HAVING RECEIVED THE SADAT LETTER IN ITS FINAL FORM. FIRST, ITS TONE OF MODERATION HAS ONLY CONFIRMED IN BEGIN'S MIND THAT HE IS ON THE RIGHT TRACK AND THAT THERE NOW REMAIN ONLY A FEW MISUNDERSTANDINGS TO TAKE UP WITH PRESIDENT CARTER BEFORE RETURNING TO THE SERIOUS BUSINESS OF SHIFTING COMMAS AROUND. SECONDLY, SADAT'S FINAL LANGUAGE IS SUFFICIENTLY GRACIOUS THAT BEGIN HAS BEEN ABLE TO CHARACTERIZE IT AS HAVING COME FROM A NEGOTIATING OPPONENT WHO MAY NOW BE FINALLY COMING TO HIS SENSES. (IN THIS RESPECT, SEE TEL AVIV 2935). THE END RESULT IS THAT BEGIN IS EVEN LESS CONVINCED OF THE NECESSITY TO THINK HARD THOUGHTS IN PREPARATION FOR HIS WASHINGTON VISIT THAN HE WAS PRIOR TO RECEIVING SADAT'S LETTER. IN RETROSPECT I NOW BELIEVE WE SHOULD HAVE SIMPLY PLAYED THE HONEST MESSENGER FOR SADAT AND ALLOWED BEGIN TO BE SUBJECTED TO THE FULL IMPACT OF SADAT'S ORIGINAL PROSE. THIS MAY BE A USEFUL LESSON FOR THE FUTURE.

3. TWO OF BEGIN'S SUBSTANTIVE POINTS ARE INSTRUCTIVE IN THAT THEY REFLECT THE DEGREE OF MISUNDERSTANDING WHICH EXISTS IN BEGIN'S MIND CONCERNING SADAT'S ULTIMATE INTENTIONS IN THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS. ONE IS THE REITERATION THAT ISRAEL WILL NOT WITHDRAW TO THE LINES OF JUNE 4, 1967 DESPITE THE FACT THAT NEITHER THE EGYPTIAN DRAFT DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES NOR
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 TEL AV 02976 061339Z

SADAT'S LETTER INSIST ON TOTAL WITHDRAWAL. I HOPE SADAT DOES NOT TAKE THIS PARAGRAPH TO CONSTITUTE A CHANGE IN THE ISRAELI POSITION REGARDING THE SINAI, WHICH I DON'T THINK IT IS.

4. THE OTHER INSTRUCTIVE MATTER OF SUBSTANCE ARISES WITH BEGIN'S STATEMENT THAT SADAT, IN HIS LETTER, CONTINUES TO ESPOUSE THE FORMATION OF A PALESTINIAN STATE. AGAIN, SADAT'S LETTER CONTAINS NO MENTION OF A "PALESTINAIN STATE". IT IS CLEAR TO US HERE, HOWEVER, THAT BEGIN'S CONVICTION THAT "PALESTINIAN STATE" WILL BE THE INEVITABLE END RESULT OF "SELF-DETERMINATION" IS ONE THAT IS SHARED BY MOST ISRAELIS.

5. AS A FINAL OBSERVATION, MY SUSPICION WAS CONFIRMED THAT BEGIN WOULD MISS THE POINT OF SADAT'S VERY NUANCED TREATMENT OF THE RECONVENING OF THE POLITICAL AND MILITARY COMMITTEES. I AM AFRAID WE ARE NOW STUCK WITH WHAT BEGIN PROBABLY VIEWS AS A FORMAL PROPOSAL THAT BOTH COMMITTEES RESUME ACTIVE DISCUSSIONS. BEGIN'S ATTITUDE TOWARD SADAT'S APPROACH TO THE PROCESS MAY WELL BE CONDITIONED, UNFORTUNATELY, BY THE MANNER IN WHICH

HE RESPONDS TO THIS "PROPOSAL."

6. I ASSUME THAT BY THE TIME ROY RECEIVES THIS MESSAGE
HE WILL HAVE ALREADY DELIVERED BEGIN'S MASTERPIECE TO
SADAT. IF HE DID NOT DO SO AT THAT TIME, I STRONGLY
RECOMMEND THAT EITHER HE OR AMBASSADOR EILTS BE INSTRUCTED
TO DISASSOCIATE THE US COMPLETELY FROM THE TEXT OF THE
LETTER. SADAT SHOULD KNOW THAT WE HAD NO CHANCE TO
DISCUSS TEXT OF LETTER WITH BEGIN, WE ARE MERELY DELIVERING
IT.
LEWIS

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATIONS, TERRITORIAL CLAIMS, PEACE PLANS, CAT-C
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978TELAV02976
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: EXDIS DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS, CAIRO FOR ATHERTON
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: P840137-1975
Format: TEL
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197803100/aaaadhnj.tel
Line Count: 126
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 3d19f8b7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS, EXDIS
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS, EXDIS
Reference: 78 TEL AVIV 2941
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3102204
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BEGIN MESSAGE TO SADAT
TAGS: PEPR, PGOV, PPDC, PBOR, EG, IS, (SADAT, ANWAR), (BEGIN, MENACHEM)
To: STATE WHITE HOUSE MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/3d19f8b7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014